

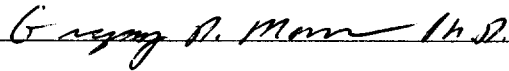
A Review of Marriage: Past, Present, and Future

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A common thread exists that runs through many cultures. In America, this thread is called marriage. It has been continually changing for hundreds of years. This term does not mean the same thing in different cultures, but it always refers to specific types of relationships. There have been many changing trends during history that are important to know about if one is to understand marriage today. Furthermore, marriage in the United States, as well as in other countries continues to change. Research has been done on the past, the present, and the future of this institution. Because marriage is so important to our culture, it is important for people to be knowledgeable about the topic.

First, the term "marriage" and its origin need to be explored. In different cultures and countries the meaning can change slightly. Edward Westermarck (1926, pg. 1) offers the broad definition of "a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it." He believes that marriage is usually an economic institution and always implies the right of sexual intercourse. Most researchers agree with these guidelines.

On the other hand, the origins of marriage are somewhat unclear. Wake (1967) feels marriage was developed to do away with the barbarism of unrestrained sex. Men and women used to cohabitate with whomever they pleased (Murstein, 1974). Some experts believe that "the probable decrease in hairiness, the

increase in skin sensitivity, and the elimination of long periods of lack of interest in intercourse on the part of females, as Homo habilis gave way to Homo erectus, could have greatly facilitated the development of pair-bonding between one male and one female" (Quale, 1988, pg. 9). Quale (1988) believes that males could now be assured of a willing partner for sex at any season and the females could be assured of affection and food and protection for offspring.

The era when people began to marry is unknown because marriage was a firmly established institution when recorded history began a few thousand years ago (Murstein, 1974). At what point the taboo against incest came into play is also unclear. Wake (1967) believes that the objection to marriage between blood relations was originally founded on feeling of kindred. Whether it was innate, was gradually developed, or arose from the perception of the physical facts of kinship is unknown (Wake, 1967).

Several different types of marriage have developed. First, there are group marriages. This occurs when a tribe is divided socially into two groups. "All of the males of each division collectively may stand in the sexual relation to all the females collectively of the other division" (Wake, 1967, pg. 95). Each group consists of persons related among themselves by blood. The Hawaiians call this punalua. Australian aborigines still practice this hereditary punalua. Other people, such as the Polynesians, practice simple punalua where the groups are not related (Wake, 1967).

The second type of marriage is polyandry, one woman is married to several men. The men may be related by blood, as with the Tibetans, or unrelated, as with the Nairs or Saporogian Cossacks. The former is due chiefly to poverty. A single man is unable to afford to obtain the sole rights to a woman. Polyandry is assumed to be a descendent of group marriage (Wake, 1967).

Polygyny, one man having several wives, is another kind of marriage. In its simplest form, the wives are all sisters. This was practiced by native Americans and Australian aborigines. However, the women usually are not related. The wife is expected to leave her family and to live with her husband (Wake, 1967).

The final form of marriage is monandry, one man marries one woman. This has always been the common form of marriage among the Chinese. However, polygyny has been practiced in China in cases where the wife is unable to provide her husband with sons to perform his burial rites and to offer the usual sacrifices at the tomb. Yet, it is monandry that is usually the accepted system among civilized countries (Wake, 1967).

An additional issue of monandry to explore is second marriages. In the United States where the percentage of divorces is anywhere between 50 and 60, second marriages are very common. However, this has not always been true in the world. The Chinese considered it a disgrace to a family member for its sons to marry a widow. The Charonides believed that "he whose first marriage has been happy, ought to rest satisfied with that happiness; if unhappy, he must be out of his senses to risk being so again"

(Wake, 1967, pg. 256). The Hindu practice used to consist of the wife being slain by the nearest relative and being buried with her husband. "Some of the American tribes [used to] compel widows to mourn their husbands' deaths, and to devote themselves to a life of austerity and chastity for several years" (Wake, 1967, pg. 264). The hardships that Caledonian women used to have to endure for the first three years following their husbands' deaths were so great that many of them committed suicide if their second husbands died instead of going through them again (Wake, 1967). Among uncultured races, the widow is often passed to the head of her deceased husband's family group (Wake, 1967). So, the rules for second marriages vary from one culture to another.

Marriage has been, and still is, more frequent among uncivilized races. The general goal for these men is to be married by puberty. "A person who does not marry is looked upon as an unnatural being or is an object of contempt or ridicule" (Westermarck, 1926, pg. 24). Among the Santals in Bengal, a man who remains single "is at once despised by both sexes and is classed next to a thief or a witch" (Westermarck, 1926, pg. 24). Today in the United States, it is not uncommon for people to remain single.

During the past few centuries, different cultures have had different styles and rules of marriage. For example, one writer said that prior to the 19th century B.D., the Semitic wife was unrestrained, often the head of the family, and usually had premarital sex. The mother gave her name to the children more

often than did the father. But, by the beginning of 1900 B.C., the Hebrew family was clearly patriarchal in nature (Murstein, 1974). They favored endogamous marriages which means that they were encouraged to marry their relatives. The choice of a spouse was made by parents with emphasis being placed on the father's favorite. After having selected a bride for his son, a father had to pay a bride price to the woman's family. The bride always moved to the groom's home. Polygamy was acceptable but was not universally practiced. If a man did have more than one wife, the rights of the women were equal. Only women could be punished for adultery; but, men could be punished for violating another man's property, his wife. If the crime took place in the city, both offenders were stoned to death. If the adultery was committed in the country, only the man was put to death. In Biblical times, a man was able to divorce his wife by simply telling her to leave. However, a woman could divorce her husband only if she caught him with another man's wife (Murstein, 1974).

In many ways, Greek marriages were much like Hebrew marriages. The women were expected to be subservient and could be purchased, traded or loaned to someone. Women were also expected to be faithful, as Penelope was in The Odyssey, while men were allowed to have affairs, as Odysseus did. Greek women played a big role in rearing children and preparing meals. The value of the wife's role was recognized by the husband, and consequently, men rarely divorced their wives. This general rule held even if the wife was barren or had committed adultery, as did Helen of

Troy. No Greek male could have more than one legal wife. The fathers always arranged the marriages. A dowry, at least one-tenth of the bride's father's estate, had to be paid to the family of the groom. Men often had several extramarital affairs. They would create a hierarchy of importance among these mistresses. Demosthenes said, "We have courtesans for the purpose of pleasure, concubines for the daily health of our bodies, and wives to bear us lawful offspring and be the faithful guardians of our homes" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 52). Men could divorce their wives for any reason, but only two reasons, infertility and adultery, were socially acceptable. If a husband was impotent, a wife could not divorce him. Instead, the husband's nearest male relative was asked to serve as a proxy. This way, the child would remain in the husband's family. The only way a wife could divorce her husband was if she could show the Greek courts that his actions, whether cruel, adulterous, etc., were endangering the safety of the family (Murstein, 1974).

Roman marriages were slightly different from Greek and Hebrew marriages. Romans considered marriage to be a personal affair. There were no religious or governmental sanctions. They believed that everyone should be married. To help assure this, the government taxed bachelors. Children were promised to future marriage partners by their fathers at quite a young age. What is unusual about the Romans is that men could not openly have a wife and a mistress. They had to choose one or the other. However, adultery was still popular behind closed doors. A double

— standard firmly existed. Cato the Censor said, "If you were to catch your wife in adultery, you would kill her with impunity without trial; but if she were to catch you, she would not dare to lay a finger upon you, and indeed she has no right" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 71). A wife was not allowed to leave her husband, but a husband could leave his wife if he caught her 1) poisoning the children, 2) drinking wine, or 3) committing adultery. As in the past, men still dominated women and marriage.

During the Biblical Hebrew period, people believed in the divine ordinance which called for a "moral obligation to beget children and satisfy sexual needs" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 90). However, with the onset of Christianity, virginity became more and more important. Marriage lost favor, polygamy was abolished, and sex was condemned except for procreation. What was surprising was that chastity became important for both sexes, not just the women. Yet, the apostle Paul took a slightly different view of sex and marriage. He believed that marriage was honorable when others were becoming uncertain of its usefulness. Paul said to the women, "Submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 101). He did not advise women to avoid sex unless the purpose was procreation. He did, however, go along with the popular view that men were superior to women. Marriage was supposed to be insoluble; so, divorce was made difficult to obtain. Male adultery was condemned as much as female adultery which was something new.



Monogamy was the only acceptable form of marriage. The Church went so far as to influence the Emperor Constantine to create a law that made adultery by men punishable by death. However, even though this was a law, the government still seemed to find ways to be more lenient on men than on women. Second marriages were considered sinful and unfortunate, but were often forgiven with the belief that they were simply weaknesses of the flesh (Murstein, 1974).

However, during the Middle Ages, the Church took a clearer stand on second marriages. It opposed remarriage if the spouse was still alive. If the spouse had passed away, the widow(er) had the blessing of the Church to remarry. Even though the legal control of marriage was centered in the civil courts, the Church still laid the foundations for socially acceptable acts. This was a continuation of religious beliefs from earlier times (Murstein, 1974).

The Medieval times brought a different light to marriage. People did not esteem the marriage relationship very highly. If a husband was brutal to his wife, she was reminded of the Lady of La Tour: "She who bears with such a husband patiently, and without discrediting herself, so much the more increases the good renown of herself and of her honors" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 117). Wife abuse during the Medieval period was not uncommon. The following proverb was well known:

A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree

The more you beat them, the better they'll be.

(Murstein, 1974, pg. 128). Women were greatly devalued during this era. They were not even considered to be worthy of education. However, they were later allowed to join English guilds. Because they began to contribute to family earnings, their status started to increase. Yet, women could still be sold by their families. A bride-purchase was required of grooms. A contract was drawn up between the suitor and the bride's father (Murstein, 1974).

Because brides had to be assured of a good future, Western Europe men seldom married before their mid-twenties. They had to first build up their fortunes. Women were considered ready for marriage after the first flow of menses, between the ages of 14 and 18. The Church still insisted that monogamy was the only acceptable form of marriage; yet, polygyny continued for some time during the medieval period. Adultery continued to have a double standard for men and women. England's early laws allowed a monetary payment for adultery for a man, but for a woman, the king decreed that "her lawful husband have all that she possessed; and let her forfeit both nose and ears" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 175). Murstein (1974, pg. 176) stated that during this era, "marriage was essentially a business contract to enhance political and military alliances for the rich and to offer economic security, children, and relief from sexual tension to the poor."

During the Renaissance years, the idea of marriage was changed somewhat when companionship was added to the list of the purposes for marriage. Procreation and the prevention of

fortification remained high on the list. Arranged marriages continued, but many writers were beginning to call for love and the freedom of choice as the main reasons for marriage. The wife was still inferior and faithfulness was still the rule. Girls were ready for marriage at the age of 12 while boys were expected to wait until at least 14. It was socially acceptable for noblemen to have mistresses. However, even noble women had to be faithful in order to be certain about having legitimate children. Wives caught in adulterous acts could be killed. Adultery, as well as "chronic marital bickering," were acceptable grounds for divorce. Other acceptable reasons for divorce included "refusal of wife to fulfill her conjugal duties in bed, hindrance by one party of the other's attempt to live a godly life, and rejection of conciliation after marital discord had separated the parties" (Murstein, 1974, p. 185). However, it was during this time frame that the Protestant Reformation began and divorce was extremely rare. In England, if one could prove that his/her spouse was cheating, being cruel, or involved in unnatural acts, he/she could obtain a divorce "a mensa et thoro" - "from table and bed" - but he/she could not legally remarry ("What you should know about divorce today," 1981, pg. 329).

During the Renaissance, more favorable attitudes toward women, sex, and marriage began to become prevalent. Women were gaining in social areas and abusive husbands were frowned upon (Murstein, 1974). Yet, the double standards still existed and men still dominated. The English common law even granted the

father of a child born in wedlock the sole right to custody ("What you should know about divorce today," 1981, pg. 329).

The Age of Reason brought about a time period that was quite different from the Renaissance. People sought to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain. Adultery was not looked upon as sinfully as it was in the past. If a husband had mistresses, a wife could have lovers if her husband silently approved. Wife beating remained legal but was frowned upon. There was a common saying that

Wife and Servant are the same,

But only differ in the name.

(Murstein, 1974, pg. 221). Upon marriage, everything the wife owned became the property of her husband. Wives turned to religion and children for comfort. Interest in sex and sexual dress developed in countries such as France. French actors and actresses engaged in spouse swapping. Men and women belonging to nobility usually had lovers. However, the Bourgeoisie women were seen as "dishonored" if they had a lover, while the men with mistresses were envied. The liberal Puritans "advocated the right of remarriage not only for adultery but for a new, unheard-of-reason - psychological incompatibility" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 224). However, the Anglican Church was somewhat stricter. It allowed divorce for adultery and desertion, but remarriage was not permitted. Yet, at the end of the Age of Reason, the Church's influence over marriage began to decline while the government took its place. "Regulatory functions and punishment

for infractions such as adultery" were turned over to the government (Murstein, 1974, pg. 227).

In America between 1775 and 1815, the colonists rebelled against the British government. They found in marriage "that social union, which the beneficent Creator instituted for the happiness of man" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 690). This became a metaphor for the colonists' social and political relationships (Lewis, 1987). They believed that "tyranny presented the most immediate and obvious threat to American happiness, and patriarchal domination [was] the chief obstacle to happy and virtuous marriage" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 691). Parental control of marriage decreased during the 18th century, while children's autonomy increased. Protestantism called for "mutual comfort" to be one of the primary reasons for marriage. Wealth no longer established the suitability of a potential spouse. The relationship between a husband and a wife changed dramatically. A good husband married "not by interest but by choice" and "[treated] his wife with delicacy as a woman, with tenderness as a friend" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 695). Republicanism called for men to be virtuous. Well into the 19th century, Americans "linked the fate of their nation to the virtue of the people" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 694). A woman was expected to "seduce" a man into being virtuous. If she succeeded, the married woman's next task was to preserve her husband's virtue. Furthermore, if a woman's husband fell from grace, it was her job to lure him back with "the charm of good humor and uncomplaining sweetness" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 694). One author

wrote, "Better to let errors go unremarked than to strike too often the unharmonious string" (Lewis, 1987, pg. 694).

During the Victorian era in Western Europe, family life became urbanized. Drastic economic changes occurred between 1760 and 1840, which caused the extended family to decline, the nucleus family to lose cohesiveness, home care to deteriorate, meals to become irregular, and drinking to increase. Two different views were popular during this time: the Romantic and the Victorian. The Romantics believed that "nature and destiny took precedence over bourgeois conventionality, and lovers should feel free to defy unnatural man-made laws and rebel against authority" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 244). On the other hand, the Victorians held an opposite point of view. They believed that sex should be deterred in any way possible. This could be accomplished through "exercise, daily bathing, fasting after 4 p.m., avoiding sexual literature, abstaining from alcoholic beverages, sleeping on a hard bed with a light covering, and religious teaching" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 247).

Women were gaining in social and economical spheres; but, they were still required to be submissive to their husbands. Everything a wife had belonged to her spouse, even her salary if she worked. If a woman decided to leave her husband, he could bring her back by force and lock her in the house. If a man and a woman decided to separate, the children automatically went to the husband and he had the authority to deny visitation rights.

Women gradually gained rights to see their children. By the mid-1800's, the wife sometimes gained custody.

Several changes occurred during the latter part of the Victorian era. After the French Revolution, France made obtaining a divorce easy. An adulterous wife could be divorced for one incident. However, an adulterous husband had to cause a scandal before his wife could divorce him. There were several recognized reasons for marital separation. Included in the list are "adultery, cruelty, slander, and infliction of punishment involving corporal confinement and moral degradation" (Murstein, 1974, pg. 252).

Americans began placing an emphasis on love and marriage in the 1800's. This led to people marrying younger and more often during the 20th century. America's mature industrial system provided young people with the free time and the abundance that romance required. They no longer had to take jobs to support themselves and their families. Many people went to college. In 1900, 62 percent of males between the ages of 14 and 19 were in the labor force. In 1920, this figure dropped to 51.5 percent (May, 1980). Women were beginning to find time to worry about their appearance. Between 1914 and 1925, the cosmetics business increased from \$17 million to \$141 million (May, 1980). Much of this change was due to the new movie industry. Americans were looking toward Hollywood for their ideas about love and marriage. However, the day-to-day married life did not meet the promises of the Hollywood style. Hence, the divorce rate began to increase

(May, 1980).

This all leads to how the current marriage trend is dramatically changing. This notion is especially prevalent in the age at which men and women are now getting married. The average age at which men married for the first time between 1950 and 1970 was 22.5. In 1984, it was 25. The average age for women to marry was slightly over 20 between 1950 and 1970. This rose to 23 in 1984. There is now a nationwide tendency to delay marriage (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). There may be several reasons for this.

First of all, one widely accepted explanation is higher education. The average income of people who wait until they are through with their college education is between \$39,700 and \$40,400 (Conklin, 1986). A college degree assures a young couple of a higher income than simply a high school diploma. Many men and women even wait until they have their careers started.

Another explanation may be the increased degree of acceptance of premarital sex. In 1971, 30 percent of unwed females had had sex before the age of 19. This number rose to 50 percent in 1979 and decreased slightly to 45 percent in 1982 (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). Teenagers are no longer pressured as much to be married before they become sexually active.

A third alternative may be cohabitation. There were 523,000 couples living together in 1970. This figure jumps to an astonishing 1.9 million in 1982 (Sanoff, 1983). Many of these couples do eventually get married, however, many cohabitators often say



they want to see what it will be like living with their lover before they actually make a commitment.

Unfortunately, women who cohabit premaritally have almost an 80 percent higher marital dissolution rate. There are two hypotheses about cohabitation. First, it may be "a trail marriage in which unstable unions are 'weeded out'" (Bennett, Blanc, & Bloom, 1988, pg. 128). The second hypothesis is that "those who cohabit are a select group of people for whom relationships in general - both nonmarital and marital - are characterized by a lack of commitment and stability" (Bennett, Blanc, & Bloom, 1988, pg. 130). They are twice as likely to see marriage as a response to social pressure and half as likely to see marriage as a way for a couple to add something to their union (Bennett, Blanc, & Bloom, 1988).

During the past 20 years, divorce rates have dramatically increased. Fortunately, "the divorce rate has begun to flatten out" (Goode, 1987, pg. 68). According to the Census Bureau, there are signs that "marital stability in the near future may be greater than in the recent past" ("Marriage, Young-American Style," 1984, p. 12). However, in 1989, Martin and Bumpass estimated that two out of three first marriages in the United States will end in divorce. A lower estimate was offered by Sanoff (1983) as one out of two.

In addition to the overall increase in the divorce rate, there appear to be trends in the occurrence of divorce. The highest number of divorces occurs in the fourth year (Goode,

1987) and the prime age group is 25 to 29 (Sanoff, 1983). Goode (1987) believes that this may date back to our ancestors who lived two million years ago. Helen Fisher of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City believes that during that period, mothers needed about four years of support and protection from the fathers until their babies were weaned. This explanation is not well supported, but it may be something to think about. A more popular explanation is the ending of the infatuation phase after the second or third year (Goode, 1987).

Bumpass, Sweet, and Martin (1990) believe that of recent first marriages, only one out of three will stay together until widowhood. Of the other two-thirds that divorce, three-fourths will remarry. More than half of the recent marital disruptions occurred before the age of 30 and about one-third before the age of 25. Only 15 percent of recent divorces occurred to women over the age of 40 while two-thirds of recent remarriages were to women who first married as teenagers. Their average age at remarriage was 33. A higher socioeconomic status is positively related with men's remarriage while negatively related with women's. This may be due to the fact that women who are better able to support themselves can afford to be more selective (Bumpass, Sweet, & Martin, 1990).

A number of explanations for the increasing divorce rate have been proposed. White (1990) offered four such explanations. First, she suggested that there have been legal changes in divorce proceedings. For example, one of the major changes in

the 80's was a shift from fault to no-fault divorce. However, there is little evidence that this raised the United State's divorce rates.

Second, White offers an economic explanation. Because there were low rates of divorce in the 1930's and high rates of divorce in the 1970's, some believe that depression retards divorce and prosperity increases it. On the other hand, White points out that prosperity may have the opposite effect and reduce divorce. Even though divorce may be more feasible when the country is prospering, the positive effects of this may spill over into relationships and hence, hold couples together.

A third alternative may be changing gender roles. Women now have more economic independence from their husbands and family since many of them are working. A tight knit family is no longer essential for basic human survival due to the increase in industrialization and urbanization (Trent & South, 1989). Furthermore, White (1990, pg. 910) says that the increasing similarity of men's and women's roles produce "less marital cohesion than the traditional complimentary roles." By the 1970's, dual-career marriages were commonplace. "A couple became partners for as long as the relationship was good" (Gergen & Gergen, 1988, pg. 48). Because there are so many couples where both partners work, many spouses can no longer spend as much time together. This factor is also correlated with the increased divorce rates (White, 1990).

The final broad explanation that White offers is an increased community instability, as measured by social mobility. She suggests that this is the best predictor of aggregate divorce rates.

There have been other explanations of the increased divorce rates offered that fall into different categories. Some say that premarital cohabitation is associated with a higher probability of divorce. The people who are willing to cohabit may also be more likely to go against the norms of marriage. These people may have a decreased commitment to marriage as an institution and a lowered concern with the stigma of divorce (White, 1990).

Furthermore, one's religious beliefs may influence a couple's likelihood to divorce. For example, Catholic populations, who are against divorce, have a lower divorce rate than Muslims, who are flexible about divorce (Trent & South, 1989). This is especially true of people who adhere to their religious beliefs strictly.

As one would expect, children also play a part in divorce rates. A first child reduces the probability of divorce to almost zero during the first year following the birth while childlessness is associated with increased divorce rates (White, 1990). Also, parents with sons are less likely to divorce than parents with daughters. White (1990) suggests that the greater involvement of fathers with sons rather than daughters is responsible for this.

People may go through processes suggested by the exchange theory when thinking about divorce (or separation). People tend to stay together if the costs of divorce are high (children) and the alternatives are low (wife unemployed, older, lower income) (White, 1990). However, if the costs are low, the alternatives high, and the marriage is not satisfying, divorce is more likely.

Finally, Medved (1989, pg.97) believes that "people could spare themselves enormous suffering if they scotched their permissive acceptances of divorce and viewed marriage as a lifelong commitment not to be entered - or wriggled out of - lightly." She states that divorced people often mourn for a part of their lives that they can never recapture. Furthermore, after divorce, the people remain the same people with the same problems - "solving skills, values, and styles of relating to others" (Medved, 1989, pg. 98). She also believes that any new relationships will be just like the old ones. Medved (1989, pg. 98) offers changing attitudes toward marriage in the American population as an explanation for divorce. They are:

- 1) "Marriage is for keeps" vs "Marriage until passion fades"
- 2) "Work to build a future" vs "Live in the here and now"
- 3) "Divorce is a shameful failure" vs "Divorce is no big deal"
- 4) "Affairs are wrong and should be concealed" vs "Affairs are okay and honesty is the best way to deal with them"

Another factor to consider are the effects of divorce. Buehler (1987) says that the initiator is the first one to begin talking about divorce. Usually, this is the woman. Some

researchers believe that initiators experience more guilt and remorse while noninitiators experience more regret and rejection. However, other researchers have found no differences (Buehler, 1987). Spanier and Thompson (1983, 1984) reported that non-initiators had a more difficult time accepting divorce and they experienced more loneliness than initiators (Buehler, 1987). Initiators and noninitiators also differed on their post-divorce stress levels. Initiators reported more stress directly following the divorce while noninitiators reported more stress 18 to 24 months after the divorce (Buehler, 1987).

Unfortunately, second and third marriages can sometimes be difficult, especially if there are children involved. Americans do not consider step relations to be "real" relatives because they are not "people who are related by blood or by marriage" (Keshet, 1990, pg. 200). Step-parents often enter the marriage expecting to share in the decision making for step-children more equally than they actually do. Remarried women report less happiness than during first marriages while the opposite is true for men (Keshet, 1990).

Furthermore, whether a person is internally or externally motivated makes a difference in his/her stress level. Internals are better adjusted and experience less intense and shorter intervals of stress during and following a divorce because they spend more time thinking through the process. Externals use avoidant problem solving methods while internals use vigilant ones (Barnet, 1990). A relating example deals with hospitalized

patients. Vigilant patients experience more presurgery and less postsurgery stress while the opposite is true for avoidant patients (Barnet, 1990). This can be carried over to the divorce process. Barnet (1990) found that women, couples with children, and longer married couples experience the most divorce stress and adjustment problems.

In addition, men are more likely than women to experience severe psychopathology, depression, and illness. For women, the seriousness is less severe, but the symptoms occur more often and have a longer duration. Usually, women experience feelings of guilt, helplessness, incompetence, and unattractiveness (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989). Perhaps women experience these feelings more frequently because many of them are forced to lower their standards of living due to financial reasons. Clarke-Stewart & Bailey (1989) reported that the standard of living lowered for 73 percent of recently divorced women while it rose for 42 percent of recently divorced men. This difference may be due to inequitable divorce settlements, small and often unpaid spousal and child support, and differential access to credit, pensions, insurance, jobs, and education. All of these factors create a tremendous amount of financial stress for women (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989). Also, women are often granted custody of the children. Researchers have shown that women with preschool children are less well adjusted than women with older children. Many mothers begin to feel like they are "trapped in a child's world" (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1989, pg. 81).

— To avoid unequal and unfair divorce settlements, many people are signing prenuptial agreements. Matrimonial lawyers report preparing two to five times as many as they did just five years ago. Prenuptial agreements are now recognized in all 50 states. These documents spell out what couples will or will not do, share, or pay upon divorce. They are especially common among people who make more than \$50,000 per year (Smolowe, 1990).

People are beginning to realize that the divorce rate is a problem. This can be seen in the fact that the divorce curve has begun to flatten out and to cease its upward climbing (Goode, 1987). Also, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy has increased tenfold since the 1970's (Sanoff, 1983).

Another changing attitude toward marriage is the increased acceptance of out-of-wedlock births. In 1960, there were only 15.4 percent of births that were by single mothers (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987); in 1970, there were 30 percent (Furstenberg, 1988); and in 1984, there were 56.3 percent (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). However, what is surprising is that the birth rate has actually decreased from 89.1 births per 1000 females aged 15 to 19 to 50.9 births per 1000 in 1984. One reason for the decrease is the legalization of abortion. Females between the ages of 15 and 19 had 150,000 legal abortions in 1971. This figure rose to 280,000 in 1974 after the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide. In 1983, 40 percent (395,700) of all teenage pregnancies ended in abortion.



Why in a nation of modernity and technology are so many teenagers getting pregnant? Since the 1970's, there has been an increase of availability in contraception. Unfortunately though, few teens are likely to use contraception effectively, if at all. In 1970, 18 percent of sexually active females were using contraception. This rose to 34 percent in 1979. However, 19 percent of white women and 41 percent of black women were mothers by the time they were 20 in 1984 (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987).

It is important to note that premarital sex is not a new phenomenon. In 1955, 14.9 percent of births were born to adolescent girls out-of-wedlock and pregnant adolescents accounted for 25 percent of all first marriages (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). However, Furstenberg (1988, pg. 121) says that "as many as half of all teenage brides in the 1950's were pregnant when they took their wedding vows." Almost one out of four women started her family as a pregnant teenager. He states that the problem first came into public view because a growing number of teens were electing not to marry when they became pregnant. This notion began to become popular in the late 1960's when women in their early twenties started rejecting marriage as a "solution" (Furstenberg, 1988). Still, in 1979 nearly one out of three women marrying for the first time was a teenager (Sanoff, 1983).

More recently, social scientists and the government have discouraged pregnant teens from marrying in the past decade or so (Chance, 1987). There has been an increase in federal, state, and local assistance to unwed mothers during the past few years

(Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). J. Brooks-Gunn of the Educational Testing Service at Princeton says, "If the father is older, has finished high school, and is working, marrying might be a good idea. But otherwise, a husband may merely add to the teen mother's burden" (Chance, 1987, pg. 14). There are several reasons for social scientists to feel this way.

First of all, 60 percent of all teen marriages fail in the first five years (Mills, 1984). At a 17-year follow-up of a study done in Baltimore, 23 percent of teen marriages were still intact whereas 53 percent of couples who had waited to get married were still together (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1988). "There is a lot of evidence that early marriages are unstable," according to Barbara Wilson of the National Center for Health Statistics ("Vital Statistics," 1983, pg. 26). Money is the primary reason that teen marriages fail in the first five years. The mothers and fathers are usually high school dropouts with few job skills (Campbell, 1984). Living with in-laws is another source of stress. Jeanne Warren Lindsay, the author of Coping with Reality, interviewed 55 young people, most of whom were married before they were twenty. Two-thirds of these people moved in with parents even though only 1 in 20 thought it was a good idea (Campbell, 1984).

Furthermore, "emotional immaturity, lack of communication skills, conflicts about sharing housework, and jealousy" all contribute to the stresses that help break up teenage marriages (Campbell, 1984, pg. 581). Also, Wendy Baldwin of the Center for

Population Research suggested that pregnant teens who marry have larger family sizes, a decreased rate of educational attainment, and a greater likelihood of an earlier second pregnancy (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). All of these factors are likely to put the family deeper in debt.

On the other hand, some researchers feel that pregnant teens should get married. Chase-Lansdale and Vinovskis (1987) believe that the attitudes of social scientists have contributed to an atmosphere which minimizes the responsibility of the father. Senator S.I. Hayakawa in 1978 said, "I see evidence of a male-dominated society that wants to let the boys off free, where possible, while we cluck-cluck-cluck over the girls" (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987, pg. 34). The Reagan administration called for research on the "positive and negative impacts of adolescent marriages on the teenage mother, her partner, and young child." However, the Bush administration's steps remain to be seen (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987).

In Woodlawn, a Chicago community, 35 percent of teenage marriages remained intact over a 10 year period (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). Does evidence like this support teenage marriages? Some say it does. They also say that children of teenage mothers who marry the fathers perform better at age five on assessments of cognitive and emotional development than children of mothers who did not marry the fathers. Children who lived with both parents were also rated higher in school adjustment (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987).

Many researchers believe that young fathers are not given the credit they deserve for their ability to raise a child. In a Lamb and Elster study of young fathers, it was noted that these young men were handling their six-month-old infants in a way that was similar to older fathers (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). Furthermore, many young men now have jobs before the age of twenty. Granted, they often do not pay nearly as much as a job requiring a college degree, but they do provide financial support for a young mother and her child. In addition, these young fathers are typically not teenagers. Most of them are in their twenties (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987).

Even though many social scientists urge pregnant adolescents to stay with their parents until they complete their education, a follow-up on a Baltimore study showed that if these teens stay three years or longer, they become dependent. At age thirty-five, they will be the least likely to be financially self-sufficient (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). Furthermore, this follow-up showed that those who never married did about as poorly as those who married and separated (Vinovskis & Chase-Lansdale, 1988).

Besides the increase in the divorce and teen marriage rates, other changes in marital patterns have been taking place. For example, "unions between people of similar backgrounds and values are being replaced increasingly by interfaith and interracial marriages" (Sanoff, 1983, pg. 46). The number of interracial marriages in the United States climbed from approximately 65,000

in 1970 to 165,000 in 1980 (Sanoff, 1983). Unfortunately, this may be part of the reason for the increased divorce rate.

Clifton Barber, associate professor of human development and family studies at Colorado State University, believes, "You have got to minimize potential areas of conflict, and that means similar social class, education, race, religion, and the like" (Sanoff, 1983, pg. 47). Furthermore, the factor of the compatibility of religions can put a strain on all family members when children are involved.

In addition, men and women are marrying spouses outside of their peer groups. For several years now, older men have been marrying younger women (Chase-Lansdale & Vinovskis, 1987). This notion has been around long enough that it has already had the chance to be accepted by most people. Eight percent of 50-year-old grooms marry women who are 30 years old or younger. Yet, there seems to be a break off point. Less than one percent of 25-year-old brides marry men over 50 (Lovenheim, 1990).

However, there is a newer trend beginning to occur. Older women are marrying younger men. Lovenheim (1990, pg. 49) notes that years ago, "men who married older women were branded as mama's boys, fortune seekers, or incompetent wimps who couldn't hold a younger woman." The wives were seen as "domineering mother figures" or "wealthy barracudas who fed on young flesh." However, today this trend seems to have caught on. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the government agency that tracks marriage trends, the number of American women

marrying younger men has increased by 50 percent in 1970. At that time, only one out of six women married a younger man. Now, one out of four women do so (Lovenheim, 1990). Forty percent of brides aged 35 to 44 and 36 percent of brides aged 45 to 54 are marrying younger men. One out of four men in their twenties are marrying older women (Lovenheim, 1990).

This new trend of younger man - older woman has gotten a lot of attention and publicity. For example, a movie called White Palace was recently released which stars Susan Sarandon (a 44-year-old who in real life has had a child with 32-year-old Tim Robbins). She plays a 43-year-old waitress who marries a 27-year-old yuppie (Lovenheim, 1990). Unfortunately, movies such as this one relay a message of melodramatic contempt or high comedy. They seem to promote the idea that younger man - older woman relationships are "unnatural, undesirable, and just plain wrong" (Lovenheim, 1990, pg. 50). Other movies which have focused on this trend have been The Graduate, Sweet Bird of Youth, and Room at the Top. Nevertheless, these movies are not hindering the trend. This can be seen in popular magazines which show actresses and their lovers. Such couples as Joan Collins, 57 and Peter Levine, 38, Elizabeth Taylor, 58 and Larry Fortensky, 37, and Cher, 44 and Rob Camiletti, 26 can be seen proudly showing their affection in public (Lovenheim, 1990).

Finally, the idea of what marriage is has changed. During the 1800's and early 1900's, relationships revolved around a "love story." Two young people saw themselves as "in love."

When that happened, they would begin to build an enduring relationship together (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Gergen and Gergen (1988, pg. 49) believe that females invented those love stories during the Industrial Revolution "to control increasing independence of men from the family." They believe that "by romanticizing lust as love and attaching conditions to its expression, women could gain some control over men" (Gergen & Gergen, 1988, pg. 49). If a man were attracted to a woman and wanted to have sexual intercourse with her, he would have to promise long-term commitments to her and to her offspring (Gergen & Gergen, 1988).

However, during the 1960's America was prosperous, had a huge labor force of women and the birth control pill became popular. Women began to seek higher education, begin careers, and work full time even when they had a husband and children. They began "to see sex as personally gratifying" (Gergen & Gergen, 1988, pg. 49). This all led to the "one night stand story." People began to have sex with partners that they did not know and would never see again (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Love seemed to have been put on the back burner for a while.

Yet, today, some say that marriage is more popular than ever (Koretz, 1987). "Many couples, even those marrying for a second time, are staging old-fashioned, large weddings that lost favor in the late 1960's and 1970's" (Sanoff, 1983, pg. 47). Love seems to be on the rebound. Gergen and Gergen (1988) offer two explanations for this. First, women want to combine the traditional love relationships with children. They are now seeking "a

love story with baby." Second, AIDS has made "casual sex passe." It is now too dangerous to have one night stands.

In addition, couples are looking to get more out of marriage than just children and the necessities of life (Sanoff, 1983). They are looking for companionship and emotional support. This may have helped senior citizens to realize that it was okay to remarry after their spouses died (Sanoff, 1983). Marriage is no longer centered on child-bearing. Sanoff (1983, pg. 47) says that "those who marry during the 'golden years' are often remarkably content."

On the other hand, marriage has declined among blacks. However, this does not mean that there has been a decline in romantic involvement (Tucker & Taylor, 1989). Three out of four men and two out of three women were romantically involved at the time of Tucker and Taylor's 1989 survey. There appears to be evidence of an economic basis for marriage among black men and women (Tucker & Taylor, 1989). Perhaps this is due to a greater number of black people than white who are unemployed and living in poverty. Tucker and Taylor (1989) believe that if current trends continue, by the turn of the century, 70 percent of all black families will be headed by females and no male will be present.

Therefore, it is clear to see that America is in the middle of a revolutionary period of marriage. First, couples are waiting until they are older to get married. Also, the divorce rate has increased dramatically; the number of teenage single



mothers is on the rise; dissimilar couples are getting married; and finally, the idea of marriage itself has changed. Many people no longer make their families the focus of their lives. In 1983 only one out of four couples opted for a traditional marriage where the wife stayed at home and the husband worked and 45 percent of all marriages involved at least one person who had been married before (Sanoff, 1983). Whether these changes are for the better or worse remains to be seen. Our country is in a state of chaos when it comes to the majority of relationships. Some say this is the price of progress.

The topic that logically follows marriage trends in the United States is marriage trends in other cultures. The type of marriages that the United States and most of Eastern Europe have are fairly unique. For example, in Eastern cultures, such as Japan, China, and India, young women are still raised to believe that they are inferior to men and should serve their husbands. Romantic love is suppressed in the East because the people believe that it is too dangerous to marriage. In Japanese and Chinese literature, romantic love is usually linked with tragedy (Mace & Mace, 1960). On the other hand, the divorce rate in Japan is only 1.5 per 1000 people while in the United States, it is 5.08. Fifty percent of all Japanese marriages are still arranged (Davis, 1986). Parents look for potential spouses who possess certain qualities for their sons and daughters (Mace & Mace, 1960). Most people marry for economic and social convenience (Davis, 1986).

Surprisingly, sex is talked about without embarrassment in most Eastern cultures. They regard it as natural and as belonging to "the wholeness of living" (Mace & Mace, 1960). "Sex and its uses the Indian regards as natural facts calling for no particular reticence" (Mace & Mace, 1960, pg. 87).

Another interesting culture is the Jewish. "At birth, male and female parts of a single soul are sundered, to be reunited only on this solemn but joyous occasion" (Lieblich & Ferorelli, 1984, pg. 118). This is the way Jewish people feel about marriage. Their beliefs contain some of the magic and romance of American beliefs. However, they still are not absolutely free to choose their future spouse. Couples are set up by friends, relatives, and matchmakers. They are often betrothed after only a few nights. Jewish people do not believe in any physical contact while they are dating (Lieblich & Ferorelli, 1984). Some of their traditions are similar to Americans' while others are not.

One country that has recently made a dramatic change is Spain. Until recently, Spanish people could not get a divorce. Divorce is based on "the effective termination of marital cohabitation" for at least one year without interruption. In addition, both parties must agree to file (Goslin, 1981, pg. 908). Furthermore, more people are starting to live together and new legislation has legalized non-Catholic religious weddings (Goslin, 1981).

Finally, a culture that deserves to be explored is the Soviet Union. To Soviets, love is not very important. Rokeach did a survey using a questionnaire which contained a scale of 1 to 18, 1 meaning love was very important while 18 meaning love was very unimportant. His results showed that people without an education beyond elementary school scored 13.90 while those with college degrees scored 10.13. There is a high correlation between love and education. In cultures that are tied to tradition, as are the Soviets, and in rural areas, love is relatively unimportant. Less than one-half of Soviet married couples believed that love was important (Shlapentokh, 1984). A study was done in Leningrad which showed that only 16 percent of the males and 25 percent of the females believed that love was important to a happy marriage (Shlapentokh, 1984).

The Soviet's public opinion generally supports marriage at the abstract level. However, when it is brought to the concrete level, feelings are more mixed. Because of this uncertainty, people have taken their types of marriage in different directions. For example, the most common type is the pragmatic model. These couples sacrifice passion and sex for stability. Others follow the permissive model where sex, passion, and stability are maintained, but only through the allowance of extramarital affairs. The third model involves serial marriages. These people do not believe in longevity of marriage and will not tolerate stagnation (Shlapentokh, 1984). Clearly, these models can probably be found in many cultures.

One question that often comes up is "What causes some couples to stay together and others to break up?" Lund (1985) has reported that there may be two different reasons. First, there is the "pull model": love for a partner and rewards of a relationship maintain the union. Secondly, there is the "barrier model": involves investments and commitments that would be lost if the relationship was not maintained. Lund's study showed that the barrier model made better predictions about which couples would stay together and which would separate (Duck, 1988). In addition, Duck (1988) states that people use the exchange theory when making decisions about their relationships. Men and women attempt to balance their rewards and costs. If an imbalance occurs, a couple is more likely to separate.

Furthermore, "we expect our partners to be open, to feel and express love or liking for us, and to help us when we need help" (Duck, 1988, pg. 108). If these expectations are violated, a break-up may be in the near future. Tiredness, boredom, and a lack of stimulation can also lead to a couple's separation. Finally, people expect relationships to change and develop, especially during a courtship. If there is a lack of development, it is likely that a relationship will deteriorate (Duck, 1988).

With all of the changes that are occurring in marriages now, it makes one wonder what it will be like in the future. Several authors have tried to predict what will be different. The book Marriage and the Family in the Year 2020 was written as if the

— authors were looking backward from the year 2020 with an emphasis from 1970 onward. There are several things that the authors foresee happening which they use as the basis for the changes they predict. They propose that there will be universal access to and general use of sperm and ovum banks, widespread use of artificial insemination, and alternative methods of pregnancy: surrogate mothers and gestation in artificial wombs ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the first century," 1985).

The authors all propose that there will be seven different trends that will occur. First, there will be a "decriminalizing trend." People will eventually give up on trying to regulate sexual behaviors. All forms of dual and group cohabitation will be accepted and no form will be considered a deviation from an ideal standard.

Secondly, there will be a "demaritalizing trend." Marriage will begin to be seen as a flexible, long-term commitment which can take many forms" ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the twenty-first century," 1985). Sex between friends will be common. People will see it as a form of communication.

Next, a "degenderizing trend" will occur. Homosexuality and bisexuality will be a matter of fact. People will no longer think that gay people are sinful deviants.

The fourth trend is called a "degenitalizing trend." Sex will no longer be thought of as simply a means for procreation.

In fact, the authors believe that most parents will choose an alternative method to obtain children. The enjoyment of sex will be separated from reproduction.

Fifth, the authors predict a "deprocreating trend." The decision of adults to reproduce will become a major social concern. Only those parents who assure the well being of their future children will be able to reproduce. If parents divorce, another family will take the child(ren) and the parents will "take turns exercising the right to live with their offspring" ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the twenty-first century," 1985, pg. 66). Children will no longer be moved back and forth between their fathers' and their mothers' homes.

The sixth trend is the "deisolating trend." Psychology will make people aware of the constant needs of humans. People will understand that a "nurturing environment in which touching, cuddling, and stroking are vital to healthy personality development and continued growth" ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the twenty-first century," 1985, pg. 66). The "do-it-yourself" ethic of the 20th century will be replaced by "you-can-count-on-your-neighbor" ethic of the year 2020 ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the twenty-first century," 1985).

Finally, there will be the "deindividualizing trend." People will learn to relate to others intimately and not to focus on themselves so much. Also, older people will no longer be

isolated ("Changes in marriage and the family: looking back from the twenty-first century," 1985).

Of course, these are just some views and predictions of some authors. However, if any of these come true, love and marriage will be quite different. No one can be sure of the future though until it occurs. Yet, it is interesting to speculate.

U.S. News and World Report ("When 'family' will have a new definition," 1983) took a different approach to predicting the future. The May 1983 issue stated that new technology will mean that families will be spending more time together while robots do the laundry, vacuum the floor, and mow the lawn. People will be able to use computers to pursue their careers, to get medical checkups, and to get an education without ever leaving the house. "Expanded longevity and all that togetherness will intensify frictions" ("When 'family' will have a new definition", 1983, pg. A4). Also, this issue stated that friends and neighbors will be likely to play a bigger role in rearing children fifty years from now due to more family breakups and more mothers working outside of the home. So, this article approaches the future a little bit differently than does the book Marriage and the Family in the Year 2020. It is important to remember, however, that no one is able to foresee the future. So, these ideas should be taken for what they are, interesting predictions.

It is clear to see that marriage has been many things to different people over the past few centuries. Even though its origins are not completely understood, experts have been able to

— piece together an educated guess. Beliefs about marriage have been continually changing for hundreds of years and more than likely will continue to change. It has been the basis and the center of male-female relationships. Whether it continues remains to be seen.



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